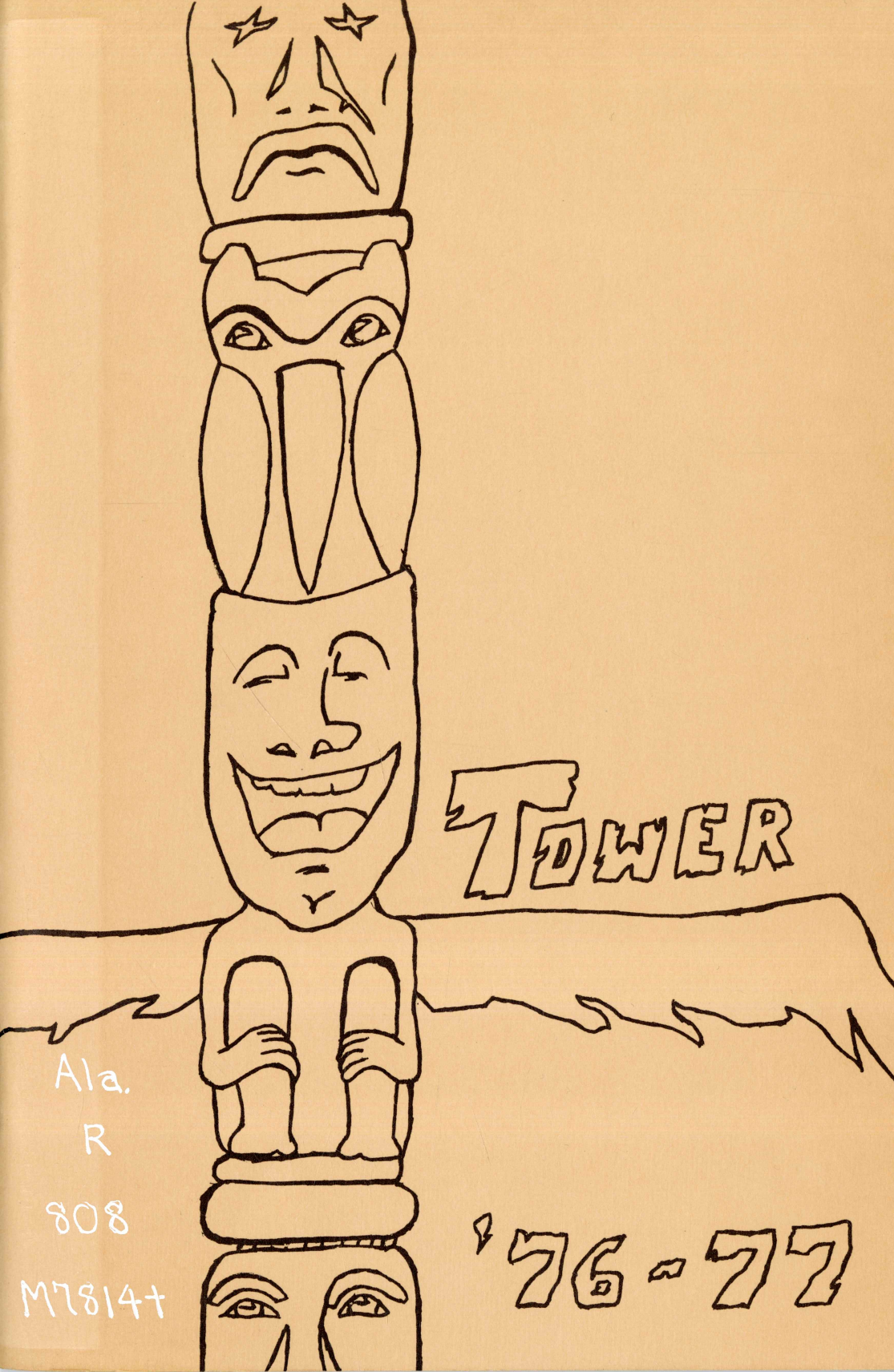

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

TOWER

[=Montevallo. University of Montevallo]

There are two kinds of people—those who sweat and those who don't. Edition XLIV of the TOWER is dedicated to those who do.

Editor: Gary Greene

Choreographer: Rodger A. Matthews

First Violin: Mary Gibbons

Italian Ambassador: Gary Houlditch

Three Wise Men: Mr. William Cobb,
Dr. Louis McCoy, Dr. John Hamilton

Judges 8:9

Nolite spectare lapsus nostros pennae.

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*TOWER Award

161417

LIKE THE LUNAR MOTH

Crushed
so many times we are
it is amazing how we can go on
living—
change is often . . .
hard for me to arrange
the scramble it causes in my brain.

Like the Lunar Moth
Who is a moth—green
for only three days
before He dies . . . I wonder how
He adjusts to the situation
So quickly thrust
from worm, to wonder, to dust

How does one truly live today
Knowing tomorrow.
that today is gone,
and soon he will be.

It is something I can not console
if I could just willingly accept
my role!

Sarah Rankin

ACT III

With timid blush she begins her cosmic dance,
Flitting on tiptoe across the brightened stage.
Her fatal beauty and stirring rhapsody
Inflame the senses.

Her mood changes. She falters.
Embarrassed, she bows a saddened countenance
To hide from heaven
Her spilling tears.

Emotions drained,
She throws back her pretty head,
Feverishly, sensuously vibrating her form
To the rhythmic crescendo of wood-winds.

Pretensions of modesty are thrown aside
As pulses quicken with loosened emotion.
To a rousing, rustling applause she flings her gypsy garb,
Rendering her grande finale with naked limbs.

* * *

The silvery curtain falls.
A subdued and pensive audience waits, wondering . . .
The callous snap of a trunk echoes through the stillness
As Autumn makes her departure.

Glenda Weathers

ELMA

All my life
I've known you through a smoke.
A smokehouse smoke
I know that you have smelled.
A bitter, salted smoke—
(I can only speculate
you standing there,
and how you looked;)
The front porch fig tree wilting in the heat;
The clothes and kitchen things;
The pictures of your sons you tried to save;
The double iron bed that never burned;
(I can only speculate
you lying there,
his back to you;
a hundred thousand nights
so spent,
and now so earned.)

All your life,
They knew you through a smoke.
In your house you burned
and
turned
to dust
a hundred thousand times.

Mary Anderson

CIGARS

ETERNAL DAMNATION

Hell. Heaven. Purgatory. Nirvana. Valhalla. Limbo. The "happy hunting grounds." The "big homeland in the sky." The "hereafter." Perhaps even "a garage in Buffalo," as one well-known comic has said. Any one of these nebulous terms could be the afterlife, depending upon one's "beliefs."

My name is Gerald Holcombe. From youth, I knew what would actually happen after I suffered the final lockup of internal machinery, after the lines on all the graphs of all the monitors became straight, after my mental activity ceased; in other words, after my physical death. I knew I would go to Heaven, the Biblical Heaven known by my people (the Baptists) for so long.

I was wrong. Very wrong.

For over twenty years I preached the Gospel, the Word of God as I believe it. I preached against the danger and certainty of Hell, the eternity and finality of it.

I was wrong about that, too.

I pastored my small congregation, lovingly cared for them, consoled and counseled them, baptized them and married them, and buried them. Above all, I warned them of the fires of Hell. For all of them I did this, with many rewarding results.

The one result I desired above all I never obtained however; the conversion of my brother, Ron, to Christianity. To save him, I believed, from the burning fires of Hell.

Again, I was wrong.

Ron was a reveler, a Hedonist, a fornicator, an alcoholic, a swearer, a liar, a thief. . . a venal, carnal, incredible sinner. For better than fifteen years I did my best to instruct him in the ways of the Lord as I knew them, to no avail. I warned him, all but begged him.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent."

(He means chastisement with the eternal fires of Hell. Ron! Repent of your evil ways!)

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

(Your sins are your mammon, Ron! Give them up and serve God, for your soul's sake!)

"He that hath rejected me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him."

(You'll be judged severely because of your sins, Ron! Repent before it's too late!)

"Too late." I meant before Ron died and his soul left his physical body. Of course, I couldn't have known our deaths would come simultaneously, by way of a high-speed head-on crash. We died instantaneously, and there was no pain. Then.

I cannot truly recall, let alone describe the time immediately following my death; I recall only that Ron and I were together, and there was a sensation similar to movement . . . .

Suddenly, we were "Here." At least, that is the name the inhabitants have for it. I realized, just as suddenly, that I was wrong. Very wrong. Totally, undeniably wrong.

Looking around, I saw an example of every sin known to man—personified. Whoring, drinking, swearing, deviations beyond the imagination of all but the most perverted of mortal men. Everywhere were persons of the same moral fibre—or absence of it—as my brother; all of them were smiling beautifically, smiles that were rips in the flesh between chin and nose that reached from ear to ear. For my brother, and the millions like him who would not abide by God's laws, this was/is Heaven.

I was wrong. Now, I am Here. Here, where I now know only despair, the despair of a man on a sinking ship, of a woman whose husband has killed her child and then himself, of a man who has seen every basic tenet that he has believed in most of his mortal life destroyed: The despair of Gerald Holcombe. The despair of myself. Ron is no longer my brother, God's laws are no longer mine, and my God has ceased to exist, if he ever did. I have gone to Hell, despite my work for "God." I am in Hell, and will eternally inhabit this Hell—as surely as I felt my brother would inhabit the Christian Hell. I can change nothing. I have already died my death.

"And in those days men shall seek Death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and Death will flee from them."

Austin Reid

LAST RITE

The Colosseum lies deserted—
the party is over—
Only tumbleweeds, bones, memory
linger in the arena;
The death rattle still shakes the silent
Christian-white skeletons.
LISTEN as the past echoes again:
Millions of thumbs follow
Nero's downward lead; millions of dead
Voices chord living thunder;
With the roar, Death shakes his shaggy mane
and ordains the last rite.

Rodger A. Matthews

THE BRIDGE

by Jane Phares

She has often stood on the bridge
And looked down into the water
Wondering how deep it is, and how cold,
And what she'd be thinking during the moments
Between the bridge and the water.
But she asks, what's the use?
Who would grieve the loss?
To whom had she given enough of herself to make a difference?
And being afraid of that which the water below offers,
She turns to walk away.
But she never seems to make it off the bridge that way,
Either.

PICTURE

by

Elvin Price

First
The boxlike window
the clerk's
smile
her good morning
her question
Then the wait, the long wait.
And the room is dimestore pictures on panelling
With Herculon carpet fighting a losing battle
Separating walls,
leaving
Empty space
bordered by chairs
uncomfortable chairs
chairs of waiting.
And the entrance
And the wait
And the room
fills
slowly the room fills.
A Mama adjusts her bra strap
slaps a bottom
feeds a baby—
Whining children.
And then the waiting
And the count
nine
ten
eleven

And the room fills
to overflowing
And a coat and tie reads Sports Illustrated
And black and beautiful polishes nails
Old bent Mama
Old bent Papa
Old dead silence
except for the whining children.
And the waiting
and the young mama
adjusts her bra strap
and slaps a bottom
and a door opens,
and a voice says
Mr. Mr. Mr.
And I leave
And as I leave
The Picture Book of Jesus
falls thud
and child-like hieroglyphics
drawn in brown and black
are stick people
waiting waiting waiting
for the vacant sun.

THE GREAT SILVERWARE REEF

There is a shark in my sink. I don't know where he came from or even what kind of shark he is. Class: chondricthyes, family: unknown. He remains hidden in the soap suds and only rarely shows his fin. When the fin does appear it's always in a different place, though I never see the shark move. I had just finished washing the glasses. I picked up a handful of silverware and dropped it in the sink, that's when I noticed him. I've read about sharks, and some, like the Mako and great white, are maneaters, so you can understand why I was cautious. He might be angry with me for dropping the silverware on him. The bites from some sharks tested in Australia measured 18,000 p.s.i. I was alone at the time. A mistake, no one to come to my aid if I was attacked. I envisioned the headlines—

Dish Washer Attacked By Shark

(AP) The grim reaper raised its ugly head today striking out into our society. John F. Armour, hard-working dishwasher at the Downtown Hotel, died today from wounds he received from a shark. Mr. Armour, onlookers said, was quietly washing dishes, when screams were heard. Mr. James Quigley, first to come to Armour's aid said, "He was stooped over, half in the sink, blood all over. It was terrible." Doctors stated that Mr. Armour died from loss of blood due to severe lacerations about the body. "It was one of the worst shark attacks I've ever seen," said one doctor.

I didn't know what to do. This has never happened to me before. I have no experience with sharks. Searching for something to do I gathered up some pots and pans and dropped them in. It seems that sharks have no fear of pots and pans. Next, I yelled at him, "Get out of there, get out of my sink." No reaction. I decided to wait. As the soap suds began to dispense I could see the shark. He was slowly swimming in and out among islands of pots and pans, prowling over a silverware reef.

Frank Armour

THE DUMMIE AND THE COMEDIAN

A dummie
Sitting stupefied
Straining to see the piano
Groping over dark keys
Eyes shifting with disease
Forgetting the names of the audience
Lost on who to please

Keys fall, crashing with clanging echoes
Stopping and sticking in putrid air
Mixing into a haze of smoke
Along with the sound of rain on the rooftop
The squeaking 'neath the floorboards
The reek of burning hair
The portrait on the wall says "beware"
& a voice behind it says
"Why should i care"

The comedian stomps in visciously
Oil dripping from cracks in his face
His finger points toward the dummie
His piercing glare commands
And the dummie rises
And dances and performs self amputations
And becomes a High School graduate
To the clapping of many hands
And falls on the floor and chews
a canal to the door & out to the gutter
and staggers back and cuts a hole through his heart
with a candleflame turned to a blade
and drains his laughter and corpuscles
out to the sewer
'neath the neon sign that reads: "I tried"
& there the Comedian stands awaiting his ovation
And a black cat with a woman's face
Winks while she drinks

Ray Bish

TOWER Poetry Award

THE NEW SISYPHUS

I'm watching my neighbor
as he pushes a little round disc
through the soil next to his sidewalk,
presuming to get an edge on nature
by compelling a tidiness for which,
prior to human administration,
earth found scarcely of use.

Except for the configuration of certain crystals,
of sedimentary strata,
and of the skylines of distant mesas,
nature has done little with straight lines.
She has been by and large content
to exhibit the shortest distance between two points
in the edgeless underworld of molecules and atoms.

Rows and similar straightnesses
are something new under the sun,
proliferated by those who feel commanded
to multiply **lines** and subdue the earth.

I bear my neighbor no more ill will
than do the ragged edges of his lawn.
But he would surely be offended
by the thought I've beamed his way:

"May the moss
in the cracks
of your sidewalk
turn to grass."

(c) 1976, Noel McInnis

MY FIRST DATE

By Ed Tully

I entered John Carroll High School in the fall of '65 at the tender age of 13. Being one of the youngest members of the freshman class was bad enough, but I looked even younger, owing to my frail 5'1", 100 lb. body, horn-rimmed glasses, and fair, rosy-cheeked complexion that any Park Avenue model would have gladly traded her last padded bra for. You can imagine, therefore, that my anticipated break into high society was going to be an uphill struggle. Having an older sister that was a Junior wasn't any help, as she would rather have walked down the hall with a gorilla than to act as if she had ever seen me before. I was definitely on my own. I went out for freshman football, and was immediately moved up to the fourth string (we had four strings). I began to associate with the other athletes in my class, helping my social standing, and I began to fit in.

The first big social event of the year was homecoming. It was really a big deal at John Carroll, and if you wanted to be "in", you just had to go. The ritual that was followed by all had its origin somewhere in the dim past, but everyone conformed like sheep, and this 13 year old freshman marched like a Lemming to the sea along with everyone else. After begging, pleading and cajoling my parents, I finally talked them into buying me a new suit, and I cashed in my coin collection (I had worked all my pre-adolescent years on it) to take care of the other expenses.

If I had had any common sense, I would have seen the futility of a 13 year old going on a date; I would have quit while I was ahead. You see, the jockeying for a date with one of the desirable girls started at least six weeks before the big event. If you didn't have a date by the month before, you were in big trouble. I asked Debbie, a girl in my French class, to go, and, to my astonishment, she said she would. I was walking on air! I would casually mention over tuna fish sandwiches in the cafeteria, that I had a date with Debbie and the rest of the guys would stare with revered looks on their pimpled faces. But then it happened. Debbie met Charlie (first string quarterback) in her math class, and all of a sudden she remembered a babysitting job she had taken two months in advance and she just couldn't get out of it. Debbie was a fantastic baby sitter and people begged for her service well in advance to be sure they could get her. This is when I should have quit. However, Lemmings have no sense, and I was no exception. Three weeks before the big event, and no date! My social standing was plummeting! In desperation, I asked Linda. Linda? She was a little this side of Miss America, but with two and a half weeks left, she looked pretty good to me. My male ego surfaced about then and I told myself, girls always try to impress boys anyway, so I could play it cool. I think God heard these calloused thoughts and decided to teach me a lesson by mercilessly inflicting the following fiasco.

Well, the big day finally arrived! Classes literally flew by, and it seemed that in no time I was swaying to and fro, lending my soprano warbling to the horrendous din at the pep rally. The seniors called representatives out of the bleachers and made them do things such as push peanuts across the gym floor, etc. However, it was all in fun, and everyone was more than happy to participate. I went home and started getting ready about 3:30. First of all, I took a shower. My hair was naturally curly, but this was the Beatle era, so nothing but straight bangs would do, so I taped my hair to my forehead. There was not the slightest hint of a whisker on my face, but I had to make sure, so I, of course, had to shave; at least the mint shave cream made me smell fresh. Unfortunately, the hot water needed for my shave unstuck the scotch tape, and was that B.O. I smelled? I quickly jumped back into the shower to scrub again, and then retaped my hair. I then sprayed Right Guard over every inch of my body, and then used a can of Johnson's Baby Powder to assure that I wouldn't sweat. By this time, the whole bathroom was so full of steam, deodorant, etc., that I could barely breathe. I brushed my teeth about five times, and started getting dressed. Everything that I put on was brand new, including my underwear. I hadn't smelled like this since I was five years old on my first day of school. I was through dressing about five o'clock, so I had until six to worry about the night that lay ahead. I had been able to talk one of my sisters into driving me and my date, and I was worried a little, but it was a lot better than having to ask my Father. Also, I felt pretty good because I had been able to borrow my brother-in-law's new expensive brown suede breast-pocket wallet. My new blue pin-striped suit looked really sharp. Well, 5:30 I could stand it no longer, so I decided to leave my basement room and go upstairs. My 11 year old brother taunted, "you smell like a girl". I guess I did overdo it a little with the Jade East cologne. As I opened the door that went into the kitchen, my Mother and three older sisters all did a double take. They tried to stifle their laughter, but the sight of me was to much for them. "His hair looks like it was painted on!" one screamed. It was then that the front door bell rang, and the man had come with the corsage for my date. I opened it for inspection, and there, nestled among the green waxed folds of tissue, lay the flower. Its petals looked pretty good, but Nature had endowed it with about the healthiest stem I had ever seen, just about the size of a small tree trunk. It would have passed with me, but with my Mother it was different. It just had to go back. In the meantime, Catherine (my driver) came in an announced that she was going out with some friends, and wouldn't be able to drive me. That just about did it; now I was going to have to ask my Father to take us, and I would be the laughing stock of the School. So be it, but I made a mental note to get Catherine back in spades.

It was finally time to go, so I collected my suede wallet, stadium seats, umbrella and corsage and was off. The last thing my sister, Martha Anne, (the Junior) said to me was, "if you speak to me tonight, I'll kill you." With that in mind, I left with my Father.

About two blocks before we arrived at Linda's house, it suddenly dawned on me that I was going to pick up my date, a girl! I realized that I was totally unprepared. I was supposed to entertain her, say the right things to be cool, and see to it that she had a good time. Fear began to come down around my ears, and my stomach was churning. As I stumbled out of the car, I said to my Father, "please

don't say a word". When her Father answered the door, I was shaking so bad that it took a supreme effort just to get through the door and barely make it to the sofa. Linda's mother looked at me patronizingly, and her Father actually started chuckling. I hated them both! After a few agonizing moments (a few seemed like an hour), Linda came into the room. I mumbled "here", and shoved the corsage box toward her.

Mercifully, my Father didn't say a word enroute to the stadium, and neither did we. When the game started, I finally started to relax. Linda didn't know a thing about football and timidly began asking questions. Since I was playing on the team and, like most boys, was a football fan, I understood the game well enough to answer her questions. This, coupled with the fact that a lot of our friends were sitting around us, resulted in an enjoyable game. John Carroll won the game 64-0 and I was feeling pretty good. Next was the dance. This was what I had been looking forward to because I loved to dance and I would be out there rubbing elbows with Juniors and Seniors! I didn't feel so bad about having my Father pick us up at the game because I found that all of my other friends were being driven by their parents also. Upon arriving, we hurried toward the already throbbing music filtering out into the cool night air. As we walked through the doors, I was awed by the scene. The gym was literally packed with laughing, brightly-attired people. To borrow a cliche, "the place was jumpin". Since the gym was so crowded and everyone was dancing, it was pretty hot, so I took off my coat, and my date and I jumped right into the thick of things. It was like a kaleidescope of faces and colors! I was in seventh heaven! Between dances, I had talked to David Clark, a teammate and we found that we had reservations at the same restaurant, so he invited my date and I to ride with them (his mother was driving) to eat. So after a few more dances I got my coat and we left. Leaving the dance was not as hard as it might have been because the biggest thrill was yet to come. We were going to the Gold Nugget to eat dinner. At this time, the Gold Nugget was the most fashionable restaurant in town. It had just been rebuilt and was really plush. All I knew was that it was supposed to be the best because I had never been to the Gold Nugget before. In fact, I had never been to any real nightspot type of restaurant and I was really looking forward to it. I remember the rather dim light with candles on each table and the soft murmer of people talking and glasses clinking and silverware tinkling on fine China plates. This was class! I didn't really expect to see all those adults. I expected that the place would be full of kids from school but as the waiter ushered us to our table, I saw none of them. After sitting for a couple of minutes and getting accustomed to the setting, I became restless. The waiter had not even brought us our menus yet and I kind of wanted to walk around and explore. After all I was only thirteen. So I decided that I wanted some gum. I excused myself from the table and strutted across the carpeted floor to the check-out counter. I reached in my pants and found I had no change so I reached for my breast-pocket wallet. My wallet! My brother-in-law's brand new $25 suede wallet! It was gone! My total conscience at that one moment was reduced to the gym seat that I had lain my coat on at the dance, and without saying one word to anyone, I burst out the door, and started sprinting. If you happened to be driving that Friday night about 11:00 p.m. anywhere on the three-mile stretch between the Gold Nugget and John Carroll High School

and saw a skinny bespectecled boy in a suit running along the side of the highway with a wild look in his eyes, that was me. All I could think of was that wallet and my money in it. As I reached the glass doors of the gym, I remember seeing the reflection of a wildman with sweat dripping off the thousand pin curls that my hair had reverted to. I bounded up the stairs past gaping schoolmates and ran into the gym to where my coat had been. Of course, there was no wallet and it slowly dawned on me that my wallet had been stolen. I felt sick. By this time, one of my teachers saw me and rushed over. I guess that he thought I had been in an automobile accident or something. I related my story between gasps for air and he gave me a dime to call my father. After I told my father the story, the first thing he said was "What did you do with Linda?" Linda! I had forgotten all about her. I dropped the phone and started running again. All the way over there I thought of my thirteen-year old date sitting in the middle of the Gold Nugget with nothing to eat and not knowing where her date went to. As I puffed up to the restaurant I saw a bewildered Linda and my father sitting in the front seat of the car. I got in the back seat and my father started the car and drove. No one said a word. As Linda and I walked up to the door I said "I'm sorry, goodnight," and she just went in without saying a word. When we got home I went straight to my room without a word. I stripped off my sweat-soaked clothes, and crawled into bed. As I lay there, I could hear my father relate my folly to the family and the roars of laughter that accompanied his voice. I didn't care. I was so exhausted that all I could think was "Thank God, it's over!"

ACTOR'S CASTLE

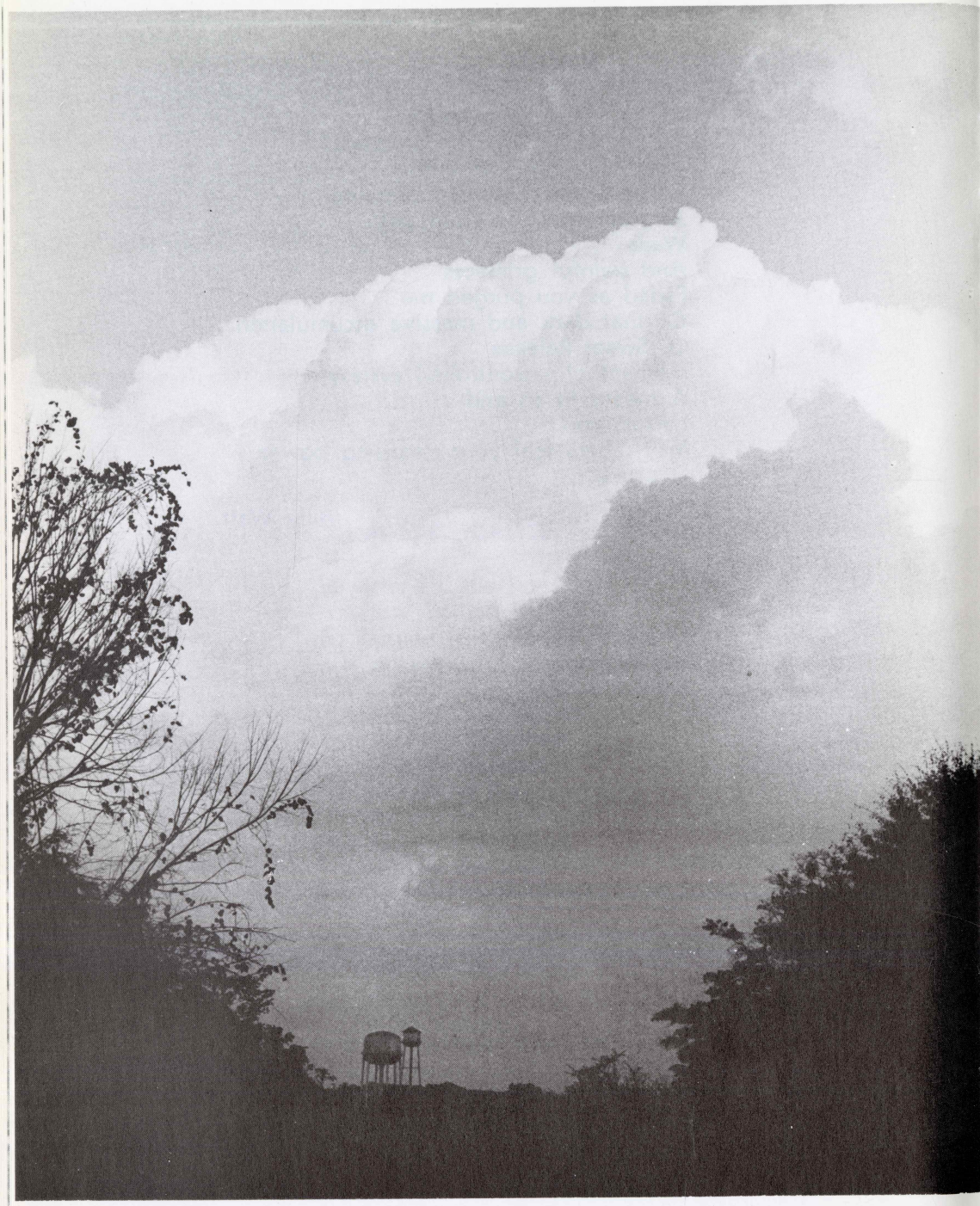
The actor's castle takes life,
from boiling horses,
and burned, cut, steady fingers
That search deep for essence
in a wooden knife that will glow
like the best metals
of an ancient alchemist
Who places magic
into everything that he makes
not unlike the men
Who live in the theatre
seeking the title
of artist, craftsman, lover
of many pictures
Pictures that are given light
one Saturday night
and placed in darkness the next
to be awaken
in a sun lit trash pile—for
styrofoam, and cloth
form a temporal castle
for temporal life

Jack Wooten

ECSTASY

May I have the pleasure
Of conveying my indebtedness?
Your liberating presence
Relieved the mounting pressure
And set me free from pain.
Wails
And painful grimaces
Faded as you purged me
Of that dark and massive accumulation.
O, Sweet Release
Moment of uncontrolled ecstasy
A means to an end
I exalt you
May others feel your cleansing power
O prune.

Billy Watt



NOCTURNE

When, in the middle of night,
bestirred by something I cannot discern,
I rise,
go to the kitchen for a bite,
look out the window at
the moon-shadowed straw,
close the shutters
and check once more
the lock on the door,
I do it for you
and (to be quite honest)
for me.

Gary Greene

MEA CULPA

The tree was there
when Judy Garland died.
I remember hearing
someone sit and weep
upon the roots.

And after seven years,

The branches are no thirstier
than we;
sometimes,

the coffin is no colder.

Mary Anderson

TOWER Poetry Award

IN GOD, WE TRUST . . .

"Your number is 109," said the man behind the glass in the New England post office.

"I'm sorry—I'm not myself today, what did you say?" came the response of Alan Garcia, a recent college graduate who had been standing in line waiting to secure a post office box.

The two had been engaged in casual conversation, discussing among other things, the majestic aura of some of the old homes in the vicinity. Alan had always felt a rather strange attraction to New England. It held a mysterious secret for him which he had always longed to know. Now as he talked with this white haired, red faced, jolly old man, he felt a similar sensation presently in his mind. Looking into the face of the man, he saw in the recesses of his own mind a white veil of mist, which urged him to go and explore it. Alan was able to carry on the conversation, but continued to stand on the threshold of the imploring and fascinating fog, and the world he was presently in. Alan related to the man his desire to scrutinize the venerable old buildings, which had led him to take up temporary residence in the town they were in, Newport, Rhode Island. The mist called to Alan, and detail to that which is covered became more apparent as Alan let his mind explore it further. He was in a state of limbo as he stradled the two worlds, hearing his own voice in the post office and the silent entreating of the mysterious mist. Alan felt a lightness in his entire organism, heard his voice and the man's in the post office, grow fainter and fainter, until all that he heard was the gentle rustling of the trees in the wind as he stood before a dirt road under the rapidly dissolving fog.

Inhaling deeply, Alan felt a surge of exhiliration as he breathed in the fresh air. He began walking down the road which stretched out before him, viewing the piercing blue sky, hearing the buzz of locust, and basking in the mystical bliss which pervaded the entire scene, "I'm in Heaven!", he screamed to the empty blue sky. He then thought better of it and asked himself just where he was. "No matter", he reasoned. "I am here and I feel good, what does it matter what its name is".

Shortly, Alan heard the sound of a horse drawn wagon on the road behind him. Turning, he saw who he thought to be the man in the post office.

"Greetings my son", the man called from the seat of the wagon drawn by three powerful looking black horses. His red, wrinkled face turned up into a smile beneath his round, silver spectacles.

"What are you doing here? Where have you come from?", Alan asked, amazed.

"I am doing here what I do everywhere, of course! And I have come from where I always come from, today I happen to be on the way to the fair. I feel most certain that you are also going in that direction and I would be most honored to take you there in my most humble vehicle!" He laughed from deep in his throat, and looked beseechingly into Alan's eyes.

"You're obviously not who I thought you were, but I would appreciate a ride greatly, thank you". Alan said this as he lifted himself on to the old, sturdy wagon.

"Don't thank me son, I just do what I do!", he said in a jovial way as he slapped the reins across the stalwart backs of the great, black beasts.

Alan felt euphoric as they traveled over the road which became more rocky the further they went. As the wagon bounced upon the road, the old man began to sing. The warm sunlight and the lulling of the movements of the wagon, combined with the man's voice to put Alan in a deep slumber.

Feeling cold and damp, Alan awoke with a start. He lay beneath a dead tree, his clothes wet with the dew which had fallen upon the grass. The man he had met earlier was nowhere to be seen as he stood up in the morning light. Alan began to walk, passing by fountains, which rained fresh clear water into their basins, gardens of bright colored flowers, and grand trees with graceful limbs on which a great many chirping birds were active. Alan paused at a fountain and immersed his head into the lucid water. Drinking a great quantity, he then sat beside the fountain and listened to the water burble behind his back. As he listened to the sound of the water splashing in spirited activity, he heard traces of musical notes. As he listened they seemed to develop into a melody. He moved his head closer to the fountain. The strains of music were less clear, then, standing up he could hear the soft notes over the water in the fountain. The sound seemed to hang in the air and he walked in the direction from which he believed them to be coming. The music became louder as he made his way past shrubs and overhanging trees. Alan stopped abruptly when he came to the clearing from which the music eminated. Standing in the clearing before him was a tall slender woman, her raven hair falling in serpentine curls, as she extracted the resonant notes from a silver flute. She remained unaware of Alan's presence as she continued to play, her delicate features contorted against the ridged outline of the flute, which glittered in response to the light of the morning sun. The peaceful melody mingled in the air, as Alan stood spellbound in front of her. Her lavender gown, bound by a white silk sash at the waist, blew silently in the calm breeze. Her head moved ever so slightly and her dark eyes aligned with the eyes of Alan's. She suddenly played vigorously, a passionate wail replacing the sweet melody which had come before. She played loudly and discordantly. Alan was driven from the clearing by the grating noises which came from the once serene clearing. He began to run, trying to get out of range of the dreadful quavering.

Past trees and fountains, ponds and gardens he ran, until the reverberating noise was out of range. It was relpaced with the sound of a dull roar which filled his ears as sunlight filled his eyes. He stood at the top of a slight hill, overlooking a great throng. Alan had never before seen such a mass of humanity. The rumbling of the crowd accompanied the vision of what appeared to be thousands of colorful marbles strewn across a lawn. Wandering into the multitude, Alan saw a large obelisk protruding from the ground. The mammoth white object standing above the entire scene. Through the crowd he could make out a rectangular area filled with water in which many of the people stood or swam, where there was room. He then let his eyes move further in that direction where he saw a large square-like, white structure. People were all over it, giving it the appearance of an enormous wedding cake covered with flies.

Moving with difficulty through the horde, Alan could see familiar faces, and then saw them again vanish as the people disappeared within the crowd. Seeing the face of who he recognized as a past teacher, he was able to gain his attention and address him.

"I know you", said Alan.

Without showing any signs of recognition, the pale, thin, man answered, "You know us all, and we all know you."

"But—why are you—we—here?" Alan stammered, looking into the deep blue eyes of the man. The ethereal eyes stared intently into Alan's as he replied, "We are here to celebrate or rather acknowledge our independence. We are where laws are made . . . and enforced." Turning suddenly, the man walked away, quickly obscured by the bodies of the many people. Alan called out and searched, but all in vain. Looking around, the crowd became a formless, colorful blob, which contracted and expanded in front of Alan's weary eyes. His vision became blurred as the great mass melted into a white, milky, flood of confusion. Alan stood in the center, enshrouded by the intangible veil, blinded by the moving, breathing coagulation. He could hear nothing, the mass had stopped moving. All that remained was the white glare which Alan stared bewilderedly into.

The piercing silence was then interupted by a ticking sound, which came in a constant flow. Alan found himself facing an immense screen, on which images flashed in front of his face. Alan tried to move but could not. He was in a suspended state, in which it felt as if he were being held down by centrifugal force. A sensation of fear, gave way to sheer horror. Sweating profusely, he was a man at the top of a large, white, marble stairway. A woman struggled in his grasp, her shrieks echoing in the hall of that vast mansion. The tortured screams of the woman reached a crescendo as the man thrust a shiny dagger into her slender, struggling, body. She fell lifelessly to the floor, crimson liquid soaking her long black hair, and forming rivulets which flowed in tiny patterns upon the white marble stair. Aghast, Alan cried out and vomited, but the tears would not obscure his vision as he was forced to continue watching the events which took place before him.

The man walked slowly down the stairs, his face obscured by darkness. He passed a large oil painting which hung in the hall of the mansion. The painting consisted of a man in a blue uniform, a sword hanging by his waist, and the woman who had just been murdered by his side. They stood among weeping willows in a tranquil scene in front of the mansion, in which the picture hung. The man had a proud, narrow gallant face; which was offset by a dark bushy mustache. The woman wore a lavender gown, her flowing black hair hung in curls at the white sash which she wore around her waist.

The man passed the picture without looking at it. He turned and faced Alan, his face exposed for the first time. Alan's mind went blank as he looked into his own eyes, staring intently at himself.

Alan was conscious of being able to move his body, slowly his vision was returning. Standing before him the rough outline of a man began to take shape. A veil of white mist slowly lifted as detail was added to the man which stood behind the glass. Alan looked with terror into the wrinkled, red face, which smiled under round, silver spectacles.

"Your number is 109, don't forget!" he said cheerfully.

Alan ran to the door, flinging it open, he went into the street, sunlight glaring into his eyes. He ran blindly, and didn't hear the police car which was roaring down the street, sirens screaming. The car screeched to a halt, its driver quickly getting out to see the outcome. He gazed upon the motionless body which lay in the street, tears forming rivulets which ran down the narrow, gallant, face and soaked his dark bushy mustache. The badge on his blue uniform glittered in the sunlight, the engraved number 109, shone brightly.

David Richardson

BEGINNINGS

As I gaze down the table I see it,
Naked . . . Ugly.
A cry begins to fill the luminous room.
We are separated;
Both strangers, both scared!
Communication now begins.
What have I brought into this
phenomenon called life?
A son!

Teri Casale

ODE TO THE WALL

Outside: the cold, late afternoon approaches
The whirling, blistering, lonely wind
Moans through the limbs,
Barren and still,
Foretelling the colder night ahead;
It trumpets across the sky,
Gray and foreboding,
Scolding those who dare to venture forth.
The crackle underfoot of ice and slush,
Limbs yielding under their weights,
Stinging flakes dying upon faces
In the fierce winter wind.

Inside: the smell of freshly-cut logs
Pervades the room with sweet perfumes.
A compact ball of fur curls in a lap,
Warm and content,
Purring and watching with trusting eyes.
The smell of hot chocolate,
Foamy and sweet,
Blends well with the fragrance of burning pine.
In the fire,
A multitude of ever-changing shapes,
Yellow and orange and tipped with blue,
Playfully engages in a game of tag.

Between: the wall.

Barbara Baker

Cola

A SALUTE TO A LADY

for Ann

I salute you.
With your skin like alabaster mansions
at midnight in March—cool warmth
giving life a peaceful countenance—
among ruby streets and emerald avenues.
With your hair like a cradle of grain
lying ecstatic in patient awaiting—
it anticipates giving life from
the fields of one spirit to another.
With your form like a young Michaelangelo's
masterpiece—reminding the world of
its intimate relationship with heaven,
and stoking the fire of life.
With your yes like rustling leaves on
a warm autumn day—carrying swirling
questions and tumbling answers
into the stained glass window of
truth with the gleam of understanding.
With your lips like a heavenly pie
lying on an uncluttered banquet
table—they open and reveal the
strains of a concerto for harp
and choir in praise of living.
With your smiles like a surprise party
in celebration of independence
which lights up the evening sky
with dazzling Roman candles and
softly glowing sparklers.
With your heart like a rainbow-filled
fountain surrounded by the green
of early spring as a young girl
chases elusive butterflies and
shares the grass with her toes.
With your soul like a view of the
Rocky Mountains from the desert—
Sharing (with a capital S) the
glory of the natural outdoors
with the spirituality of the
new spring among fading winter.
I salute you.
A lady!

Rodger A. Matthews

ANOTHER FUNNY STORY

by

Elvin Price

Why?
Boy, I'll tell you what—
someone tripped me
and got away before I
knew what was what—
And that 's just the beginning
For starters
The wreck and ruin of that fall
was the hardest thing to get over
Hospital beds,
Needles, in and out
of light rooms and dark corners,
Fading faces, walls, then
gentle blackness without pain.

(I talked to God)
But somehow just when I'd
settle in
A rumbling and roaring would begin,
Boy, I'll tell you this head would go
And I don't know why, just light
Again,
Blurred faces—voices
Confusion instead of the
peace and quiet.
(And the light of the world is—
And Charity is—
And silent night is—)
I went under several times
And then I'd come out
Boy, I'll tell you what
Believe it or not
There were times I felt free
(The truth shall—
Above everything
and everyone
free)

You ask me what? Well, I'll tell you,
Be glad to tell you,
The first thing I remember,
coming around,
Was Nighttime through the windows
and stars shining through the
parted curtains,
A few stars
but enough stars for one
close call to see
how far we all come
and how far we all go
to make our stroke . . .
Well, I'll tell you,
it was like a painting—
The stars I mean, just a big beautiful
painting against those stark walls.
I was pinned down.
I mean the needles and things
and heart—
beats in irregular
lines on a screen
And that was how that was
—pinned to a screen—
(I talked to God—
And love is . . .
And neighbors are . . .)
Well, for a while it lasted,
I mean, I am not myself
Yet, you see
I feel this need . . .
But anyway
Boy, I'll tell you what
Sometime we need to talk
about who it was
And how it came about
Well, yes,
That's another story
Funny,
I almost laugh thinking
about it.

Dandelions are fluffs of happiness.
Love is just a blow away.
Twelve times I've picked one of these snowy flowers
of fortune, fuzzy friends that they are.
Twelve times I've blown the seeds of wishfulness into
the world of wind and hatred.
Always there were five or six unfriendly foes
left laughing because my wish would never
come true—laughing, because no more dandelions were in sight.

Melody Putman

TOWER Photography Award
(opposite page)

FAMOUS BLUE RAINCOAT

"Nathan? she called from the doorway of his study.

"Yes, Martha?" he asked, looking up from his manuscript.

"I'm going to buy groceries. I'll be back in about an hour."

"Okay, dear," he looked back to his manuscript.

She sighed and turned away.

"Don't buy the store out," he made a vain attempt at humor.

She chuckled to soothe him, "I won't," she called.

He heard the front door shut and watched her shadow across his velvet draped window. He listened as the car engine turned over and then she was gone. Silence enveloped him. He walked to the window and stared across the lawn.

He was surrounded by all the signs of prosperity. He owned a large house in a fashionable suburban neighborhood. He was married to a beautiful woman. On one of the bookshelves in his study sat the books he'd had published . . . eight in all. Thinking of all this he chuckled to himself . . . prosperous, yes; successful, by no means.

He went back to his desk, and switched on the radio to drown out the silence. Then he reached in his top drawer and pulled out a sheet of stationery with his name engraved across the top of it. "Nathan Allan Perry." He took a pen and began.

"Dear John,

I'm writing to find out how you are after your fall. According to Jane you had a slight concussion. I hope it was nothing too serious.

Autumn has come to us here on the East Coast and it brought Cold Weather along. Martha and I brought the warm clothes from the attic yesterday. I don't suppose you have much need for warm clothes even now in New Mexico. . . "

He broke off remembering the events that led up to his younger brother's move out west. It had been almost two years since John had gone. It was after a visit to his publisher that Nathan had decided to drop by his brother's apartment. As children he and John had been enemies, constantly fighting for ther parent's affections. But now, as adults, they were much closer. He walked up the four flights of stairs to John's apartment. He rang the bell, but no one answered. He tried the door and found it unlocked. He went inside.

"John," he called, throwing his blue raincoat over a chair, "John, are you here?"

There was no answer. He knocked on the bathroom door. Then he noticed the bedroom door was ajar. He pushed it open and saw his brother and his wife on the bed. He backed out of the room moaning. He heard his brother calling him, but he didn't stop. He ran out of the apartment and down the stairs and out into the rain. He ran and ran and ran until he slipped and fell on the concrete. He lay there sobbing with the rain falling on him. The pedestrians walked around him. No one stopped. Finally he got up. He didn't notice his bleeding hands and knees. He just walked aimlessly through the rain.

In the evening the rain stopped. He walked on on his aimless journey, the blood had dried and caked on his hands. His knees were becoming stiff from the fall and the rain and the walk. He had nowhere else to go so he went home.

Martha was there waiting for him. She was silent as he walked to the bar and poured himself a drink. He tried to pretend that she wasn't there. She was silent until she noticed his cuts.

"Nathan, you're hurt. Let me see about your hands."

"I'm alright."

"But Nathan . . . "

"Goddamn it, I'm alright!" he shouted.

She sat back in her chair and waited. He poured another drink and went upstairs to shower and dress his wounds. When he came into the bedroom from the bathroom, Martha was there sitting at her vanity.

"What the hell is this?" he shouted, "You're sticking to me like glue. Why didn't you just come on in and join me in the shower? Or do you only do that with my brother?"

"Nathan . . . "

"Don't Nathan me. Whatever you have to say, I don't want to hear it. All I want is you out of my house."

"Nathan . . . "

"Just shut up. I'm talking right now," he raged, "What I want to know is why? Why the hell . . ."

"Because I love him," she shouted.

"Love him?"

"Yes, I love John."

He grew silent and calm, "I'll fly to the Dominican Republic first thing in the morning for the divorce," he finally said.

"Nathan, I don't want a divorce."

"Don't want a—you just said that you're in love with my brother."

"I'm in love with you too."

"In love—oh lovely! It's ennie mennie minnie moe time, huh? Who am I going to sleep with tonight, huh? Well I don't like that game and I'm not going to play it."

"Nathan, I've called John. He's on his way over to talk to you."

"I have nothing to say," he said, pulling a suitcase from the closet, "to either of you. I'll go to a hotel tonight. And if you won't agree to a quick divorce, I guess we'll just have to do it the hard way."

"But Nathan . . ." she was interrupted by the doorbell, "That will be John."

He paid no attention, but went on packing. She left to answer the door. In a few minutes his wife returned with his brother. He looked up. John was wearing the raincoat he'd left at the apartment.

"It isn't enough that you take my wife," Nathan yelled, lunging for John, "You have to take my clothes as well, huh?"

He jerked the coat off John, tearing it at the shoulder. He threw the coat on the floor and drew back to hit his brother.

"I put the coat on so I would be sure not to pack it," John said.

"What?" Nathan asked, dropping his fist.

"You heard me, I'm leaving Nathan, but go ahead. Hit me. I deserve it. I've already given myself a thousand lashes. Anything you do to me now can't hurt nearly as badly as when you walked through that bedroom door this afternoon."

"What?"

"Let's go down stairs, "Martha suggested, "I think we could all use a drink."

She ushered her husband and her lover out of her bedroom and downstairs into Nathan's study. She poured drinks for all of them. The two men sat silently until John spoke.

"Nathan, we never wanted you to find out."

"I wonder why," he replied bitterly.

"Nathan, today was to have been our last time together," Martha told him, "I couldn't continue knowing that I was risking an estrangement between you two."

"And Nathan, I knew what would happen between you and Martha if you found out about us. And I couldn't have a part in hurting you like that. Not after it took us so long to become close."

"So John made arrangements to move out west. That way we wouldn't be able to see each other. And maybe we could have forgotten," Martha explained.

"That way we wouldn't run the risk of hurting you," John added.

"All nice and simple—until I walked in this afternoon."

"That's right, Nathan," Martha agreed harshly, "Until you came blundering in."

"How long has this little affair been going on, anyway?" Nathan demanded.

"For about six months," Martha said.

"Six months? But you and I have been closer in the last six months than ever before!"

"That's right. Since I've been having my affair with John I've been freer to love you."

"Freer? That doesn't make sense."

"Nathan, you're a complex man. You're fascinating, but you're never able to completely step down from that cloud you live on. You keep everything locked up inside you. Everything you do is restrained. But John is different. He lets everything out. Nathan, John has been my pressure valve. When I'm with him, everything is simple and out in the open. I need that simplicity to deal with your complexity. Because I love John, I can love you better. Don't you understand?"

Nathan sat perfectly still and silent. He looked up after a moment and wiped a tear from his cheek.

"So where do we go from here?" he asked.

"I'm leaving for New Mexico in the morning," John said, "I'll have it easy. I'm leaving just when the going's getting rough. But you and Martha have to pick up the pieces and go on."

"There are no pieces to pickup," Nathan moaned, "There are no pieces. How can I take her in my arms knowing she's in love with my brother?"

"I'm in love with you too, Nathan," Martha insisted, "I never stopped loving you."

"That's true," John chuckled, "She's even called me by your name a time or two."

"I don't know," he said, "I can't see a way clear."

"Nathan, I'll never leave you," Martha said with a quiet conviction, "I can't stop you from going, but I'll always be here whenever you come back."

"Come on, Nat. The woman is devoted to you. Don't treat her like this. Would to God she felt that way about me."

"Alright. Suppose I do stay with Martha, but what about you two? It's obvious nothing is going to change now that I know."

"True," Martha said, "Now that you know, there's no reason to end our affair. John and I thought that perhaps I could fly out once a year and spend about a week with him."

"Fly out and spend . . . " Nathan shouted, "No wife of mine is going to fly across the United States to spend a week screwing my brother!"

"Oh come on, Nat. Surely you can do without her for a week," John said.

"And what am I supposed to do while she's with you?"

"Anything you please, I guess," John answered.

Nathan looked helplessly from Martha to John. He sank down into his chair.

"My world is crumbling down around me," Nathan sobbed, "And there's nothing I can do to stop it!"

"Look at the bright side of it all, Nat," John suggested, "It'd make a great novel."

"You I don't need," Nathan said, grinning through his tears.

"Friends?" John asked, going to his brother.

"I have no choice," Nathan opened his arms to John.

". . . Martha sends her regards and says that she plans to fly out around the fifteenth of next month. I'll spend that week in New York with my publisher. I've written that novel you suggested on the night before you left. It should be out in a few months. I wrote it as therapy. It was the only way I could deal with it all.

"I miss you. You should come East again soon. You looked tired the last time we saw you. I guess it was all that work on your house. Allow me to suggest that you not fall off any more roofs.

"I want to thank you for the difference you've made in my marriage. Martha and I are much closer. And speaking of Martha, I think she's just returned with the groceries. I must close now so I can help her get them in.

Sincerely,

Nathan Perry."

Debbie Reddin

CLAY TRILOGY

I

I am the artist
and I am the mound of clay she strikes.
Unruly clay
that mockingly fights and pokes and jabs back
that bites the creator's hand,
that cries and
births both beauty and evil
in the same issue,
that refuses permanent casting.
I am the child.
I am the mother.
I am the lady
in her wicker chair
on the sun porch
sitting among her primed and potted plants.

I am the artist
with sleek shadowed memories.
I am a star
on a starless night.
I am my own grasp
tightly, tightly around a beam of light,
a flicker of fire.

II

I mostly hear silence.
A dark reeling silence
and I sit here
sunken within myself
drunk off the world
and sometimes I thickly hear
people
and sometimes they are stone
personified
and sometimes they are need
personified
and sometimes they are
exactly-what-I-am-not
personified.

And still I sit
here in my muddled darkness
and sometimes I feel
the hand of God
reaching, loving, pulling
and sometimes
I feel it on my shoulders,
by reason of my burden of being
pushing me back, down, deeper
into solitary thick sin-soup
and I cause myself to die
and God causes me to resurrect
and sometimes I hear a voice
and it is saying
getup, get up
you are
a child of infinity. Get
up
but I cannot, can
not and I hear
another sound and
know not if it is the same voice
or another voice,
I do not know
if it is laughing
or weeping
and I don't know where it comes
from
or if it is myself
or if it is not myself
for I am only sure
that I do not
recognize it.

III

I know who I am.
I am the little lost sheep
Jesus was hunting
the day the Devil
came to town.

Mary Gibbons

Let the fire burn slowly.
Instead of heaping on all the wood at once,
Add a little at a time.
That way the fire won't blaze hot for a while and then
Go out.
That way the warmth will last longer.

Jane Phares

A BLIND MAN'S POINT OF VIEW

On a hot sterilizing Algerian day, two Europeans were strolling, as usual, along the deserted back streets of ..... As they passed a corner they noticed a man, dressed in native habit, his back to them, working at a loom. The rhythmic sounds of the shuttle and fly attracted them. Upon entering the shop they were amazed at the number and variety of rugs on display. One commented, to the man weaving, that the pattern in his rugs was delicate and beautifully intricate. The man, without stopping or turning, said, "What is pattern?" The other European stepped forward saying, "The colors you utilize evoke an unintentional beauty." The man, without stopping or turning, said, "What is color?" The Europeans looked at each other, then back to the rugs. "How much is this rug?" The old man, without stopping or turning, said, "What is a rug?"

Frank Armour

THE FEAST OF THE SUPERHEROES

There they were, all gathered together in the very same room. Soft music from the stereo and light conversation. Superman was there with Lois Lane who, as we all know, had been his consort for years. There was no doubt about the nature of that relationship. He stood in the corner near the bar with a martini in his hand speaking quietly but in deep resonant tones to those who stood around him. Batman and Wonder Woman moved sensuously in slowly turning circles in the center of the rec room set aside for dancing. Smiling and making inaudible conversation, they moved to the music. There was still time.

Captain Marvel commanded much respect and admiration, having been a hero longer than some others. He stood casually leaning against the doorway to the furnace room talking to young Jeremiah who hung on his every word. When Jeremiah spoke his voice cracked slightly, not quite mature. His Coke revealed his age and added an interesting image to his "Thus says the Lord"s. There was still time.

Jesus stood talking to a bishop regaled in robes. They smiled and talked quickly and intensely . . . concern and caring noises filled every phrase. They never talked about themselves but others, and the burdens others have laid upon their shoulders. The overweight bishop munched on tiny hors de'oevres from a pink paper plate in his left hand. Jesus, plainly robed with dust on his feet and stringy hair drank his Thunderbird from a paper cup. There was still time.

All together in the basement room, making conversation, laughing never too loudly, drinking premixed cocktails and wine and munching on pieces of cheese. A feast of superpersons, prophets, priests, messiahs, Shakespeares, Donnes, Strongmen, Superwoman, and even Allen Ginsberg laughing loudly, spouting obscenities, and being stared at by the rest. There was still time.

Suddenly the dimly lighted room was flooded with bright light. The music stopped, and a panic filled the room. "There's no more time," the host informed us, as we looked around at each other to see who would be first.

In the bright light we could see plainly. The masquerade was over. Superman's suit was slightly baggy and the bishop looked afraid. Jesus reached quickly under his robe for the glasses in his trouser pocket. Slowly at first, then more quickly, wanting the party to end, the masks were removed and people hurried into the night with a terse "Thank you" to the host. There was no more time.

Clark Kent, who liked to disguise himself as Superman to keep people from discovering he wasn't a very good reporter. Bruce Wayne, whose inheritance was spent on gadgets. Dianna, the secretary who covered up her dull routine by being Wonder Woman. Jesus was only a local pastor who thought his congregation was persecuting him. The bishop, a priest who liked Kiwanis. The prophets, local liberals. And me. My boots scuffed and my Lone Ranger costume two sizes too small.

There is no more time. We can only be . . . persons.

Ron Brewer

A LONG DARK NIGHT

By R. Scott Farris

It's a dingy cheap hotel
in this city
just another stop
along the way.

The neon sign
outside my room
flashes red
through the blinds.

I lie in the dark
on the bed
and watch the red
flash on and off
and I'm alone
again
for a long night.

I strike a match
and watch the glow
then light another cigarette
I inhale
I exhale

The gin is cheap
and the bottle is nearly empty
I lie back
and blow smoke rings into the dark.

I see the shadows of my room
defined, refined
the silhouettes of my fear
there in the corner.

And the mayor died today
it all goes on without him
the city mourns
but nobody cares.
Why should they?

The cars in the dark
run in streams of light
as the city lights go out
one by one
just like the mayor
just like me.

and the neon sign flashes red
on and off
I just sit in the dark
take a puff
watch the glow
I lie back
just like the mayor
and his city
I slowly die
alone in the dark.

The temperature drops and tells many
to go inside and escape the tormenting shadow.
At peace are they . . .
in their domes . . . Still . . . Wondering.
Though wondering eye is seldom adjoined.

Oh Galileo, where are you now?
When we are asleep with our seven moons
Wondering if one would be better.

What is hate?
We've heard of war and the boundries that
    come between us . . . past.
We've seen the beast and the mark he's
    made
But we have fed him well . . .
Oh, God!
Does that small planet know? Does the lizard?

Gary Houlditch

MY SHELL HAS CRACKED

my shell
has cracked
and no matter
how i cling
to the
fragments
i don't seem able to
hide
myself
sufficiently
i find myself
altogether
too much
out in the weather
and i think i'm having
serious
doubts
about
my ability to survive
in this climate
so you see
you should not
shout
or
roll
clumsily
about
but if i'm seen hiding
under the
table
you should be considerate
and visit me
and not bring
sharp
objects
with you
but, yes
someday i may grow feathers
and fly away
and we may meet again
exploring
some distant
land

Ray Bish

It was only the third time she had stayed on campus since coming to the university in the fall. Somehow, Marty felt this weekend would be as empty, lonely and long as the other weekends had been. She walked into her room, laid her books on the cluttered desk and plopped down on the edge of her bed. Marty was glad the week was over, but she had apprehensive feelings about the weekend that was just beginning. After kicking her shoes off, Marty laid back onto the bed and stared at the empty bunk above her. Tears began to sting her eyes as she thought of the two girls who had tried rooming with her, but each girl left just two weeks after moving in. Marty just didn't get along with people, or maybe they didn't get along with her.

The late March afternoon sun coming through the venetian blinds in jaggered patterns made her wince. She closed her eyes to put the sun out and she closed her mind and tried to forget the reasons she was alone. . .

Later, Marty awoke and realized that she had slept into the night. She got up to go to the bathroom and noticed it was 3:30 by her clock. As she was walking down the deserted, brightly lighted hall to the community bath, Marty thought she saw someone standing in the phone booth. This was odd because the phone had been disconnected since the beginning of the semester. She went on to the bathroom that always felt like a sauna when you first walked in, and she went into a stall. Marty could have sworn she heard someone walking around in the shower room, but she wasn't sure. Her heart began to pound faster and she just knew whoever was in there with her would hear it beating. Thinking how silly it was to get frightened, she tried to calm herself by humming a song, but the sudden loud noise of the toilet being flushed made her more nervous. She decided she wouldn't stop to wash her hands, instead she would hurry back ot her room where she wouldn't feel so jumpy. Walking from the bathroom into the hall, she realized that she would not settle down until she looked into the shower room to confirm the fact that no one was in there. She went to the end of the bathroom and slowly stepped into the shower room. No one was in sight, but still not completely satisfied, Marty hesitantly went to the first shower stall and jerked the curtain back. Thank God, nobody was there; however there were two other stalls to be checked. This time she walked up to the next stall with a little more ease and gently slid the curtain to one side. Nothing. With even more ease, she looked into the already open third stall and saw no one there. She was rather proud of herself for having gathered the courage to face up to her fantasized fear.

Marty walked back down the hall toward her empty room. She made it a point to glance into the phone booth as she passed, and once again, she rebuked herself for thinking that someone might have been hiding there. She sort of laughed to herself and began to think how funny it would be to tell a roommate about her hair-raising experience in the John, but since she had no roomate, she would resort to writing about the night in her journal she was keeping for freshman English. When she got back to her room, she found her door closed. Marty thought this odd because she could definitely recall leaving it open. Again that insecure feeling returned so she stepped quickly into her room and locked the door. She stood with her back against the door hoping the safe feeling she usually got after locking her door would come.

When her eyes got accustomed to the darkness that was interrupted only by the light from her digital clock, Marty walked over to the desk, sat down, and turned on the light. The loud noise of metal scraping metal shocked the still quietness of the room as she opened the desk drawer to get her journal. Marty flipped through the pages of the notebook until she came to the end of the last entry where she filled in the date and tried to think of an exciting way to begin writing. She noticed that her hand was trembling as she held the pen. Finally a title came to mind and across the top of the page she wrote: A Night Visitor! ! As she wrote she noticed something move at the end of her closet at the side of her room. Out of the corner of her eye she could tell it was a man. Her breath came fast and heavy, but no kind of sound would come to her throat as she sat there at the desk afraid to look directly at the intruder. Now she knew why her door had been closed. Marty just sat there staring at the words she had written. Those words began to swim around on the page from the tears that had come to her eyes. Marty heard the man begin to move toward her then she slumped over onto the desk in a faint. The man continued to slowly walk toward her until he . . .

The ringing of the telephone startled Marty so that she awoke. Dazedly she raised up from her bunk and slowly walked over to answer the phone. She picked up the receiver and was relieved to hear Elon, a girl she had met in the cafeteria that day. Elon wanted Marty to come watch television and spend the night in her room since they would both be alone for the week end. Marty gladly accepted! She hung the phone up, grabbed a jersey to sleep in and looked at the clock. It was a great relief to find out that it was just 6:20. Marty started walking down the hall, but she stopped before getting to the phone booth. She stood there for a few moments, then she ran past the booth and down the stairs to Elon's room.

Cindy Shirley

ORDEAL

Friend, we made it.
through a night felt long enough
which found us strong enough
only to endure.
Life is long enough,
we may be sure,
that there'll be better days.

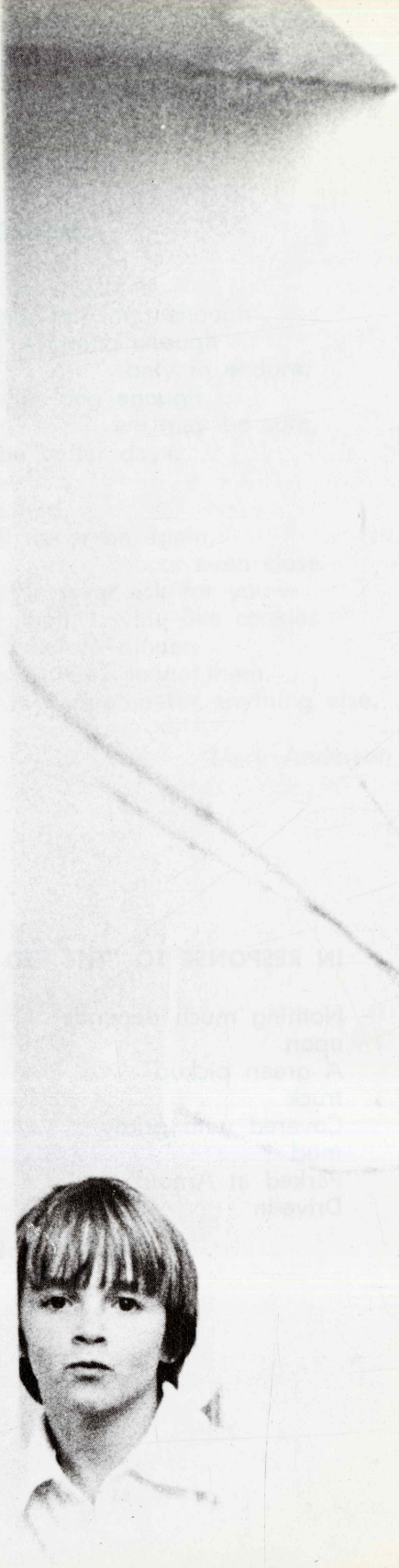
So, what we had
will never be again,
or even close.
So I'll never ask for you—
hell, I will—like cookies
before dinner.
I will sneak to get them.
To ruin my appetite for anything else.

Mary Anderson

IN RESPONSE TO "THE RED WHEELBARROW"

Nothing much depends
upon
A green pickup
truck
Covered with grimy
mud
Parked at Arnold's
Drive-in

William Cobb Hazelrig



MEMO
(TO TRAVIS)

I read about you in the paper today
About how they finally found you on the mountain.
You always did like the mountains best.

The paper said you planned it perfectly,
Everything was in its proper place.
And I said you always were one for making plans.

They said that it was such a waste
With you being in your prime and all.
But tell me which was a waste, the life or the death?

And tell me please,
What's it like with the wind all around
And the sounds rushing at you?

What did you notice,
Was it the smell of your last autumn
Or the rain that was starting to fall?

How did you feel,
When was the pain the greatest?
Before you left or after?

Nevertheless, I hope you're better now
And maybe I'll see you around sometime
You know? I like the mountains too.

Karen Nappier

NIGHTFALL

Standing taller than a man should,
The deceptive mugger threads his
Patient way through the city's
Tenement alley; he moves as
A cat among the crushed cardboard,
Shattered glass, and other waste to
The mouth of the adust tomb. His
Dreamy shadow peers through the haze
In search of you; the intense gaze
Fades as he hears your goosebumps crawl
Along your spine and fear bubble
Onto your forehead and tear at
Your eyes.

A flash of headbeam slashes
Across the lifeless night giving
You a glimpse of black leather, black
Cloth, and tempered steel. Fear claws at
Your speeding heart and rides upon
Your chest; the ache in your blue-eyed
Stare answers his shadowy stare of
Desire.

An instinctual dream
Of asylum forces you to dash
Down the alley, and chase your steps
Fecklessly toward a slamming
Window. Too late—you glance over
Your shoulder and catch sight of the
Steadily approaching shadow.
The fearful pupils of his blue
Gaze back you through the rotting
Inhabitants with their glassy
Stares to the waiting metal bins.

Rodger A. Matthews